

SIX FOOD FIRST PRINCIPLES

We can now counter these six myths with six positive principles that could ground a coherent and vital movement:

1. There is no country in the world in which the people could not feed themselves from their own resources. Hunger can only be overcome by the transformation of social relationships and only made worse by a narrow focus on technical inputs to increase production.
2. Inequality is the greatest stumbling block to development.
3. Safeguarding the world's agricultural environment and people feeding themselves are complementary goals.
4. Our food security is not threatened by the hungry masses but by elites that span all market economies.
5. Agriculture must not be used as the means to export income but as the way for people to produce food first for themselves.
6. Escape from hunger comes not through the redistribution of food but through the redistribution of control over food-producing resources.

What would an international campaign look like that took these truths to be self-evident?

If we begin with the knowledge that people can and will feed themselves if allowed to do so, the question for all of us living in the metropolitan countries is not "What can we do for them?" but "How can we remove the obstacles in the way of people taking control of the production process and feeding themselves?"

Since some of the key obstacles are being built with our taxes, in our name, and by corporations based in our economies, our task is very clear:

Stop any economic aid — government, multi-lateral or voluntary — that reinforces the use of land for export crops. Stop support for agribusiness penetration into food economies

abroad through tax incentives and from governments and multilateral lending agencies. Stop military and counter-insurgency assistance to underdeveloped countries: it is used to oppose the changes necessary for food self-reliance.

Work to build a more self-reliant food economy at home so that we become even less dependent on importing food from hungry people. Work for land reform at home. Support worker-managed producers and distributors to counter the increasing concentration of control over our food resources.

Educate, showing the connections between the way government and corporate power works against the hungry abroad and the way it works against the food interests of the vast majority of people in the industrial countries.

Counter despair. Publicize the fact that 40 percent of all people living in underdeveloped countries live where hunger has been eliminated through common struggle. Learn and communicate the efforts of newly liberated countries in Africa and Asia to reconstruct their agriculture along the principles of food first self-reliance.

Most fundamentally, we all must recognize that we are not a "hunger" movement. Rather, we all can become molders of the future who have chosen to use the visible tragedy of hunger to reveal the utter failure of our current economic system to meet human needs.



THE STARVATION

When the great Irish famine set in some 130 years ago, Charles Trevelyan, the English Treasury official responsible for famine policy, refused to allow the procurement of home cereals for relief because it would "disturb the market". In Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman* (1903), the returned Irish American, Malone, insists on calling the famine "the starvation":

"Me father died of starvation in the black '47. Maybe you've heard of it?"
"The famine?"

"No, the starvation. When a country is full of food and exporting it, there can be no famine. Me father was starved dead and I was starved out to America in me mother's arms."

(From Jonathan Power, "The Alternative to Starvation", *Encounter*, November, 1975.)

"The real question, therefore, is whether each of us is prepared to accept the challenge of building a state in which no man is ashamed of his poverty in the light of another's affluence, and no man has to be ashamed of his affluence in the light of another's poverty."

Julius K. Nyerere
President of Tanzania

"We do for the poor until they are done for."

CALCUTTA SOCIAL WORKER

"Hunger is merely the one dramatic symptom of a deeper ill; the persistence of national and international orders that foster distorted development."

Denis Goulet

I believe in God, Creator of an unfinished world Who does not decree an eternal plan of development in which we cannot participate.

I believe in God, Who has not divided people into the poor and the rich, specialists and the ignorant, owners and slaves.

I believe in Jesus Christ, Who saw the world situation and Who took a stand in it.

Taking Him as my example, I see the precaution with which we must organize, the extent to which our intelligence is atrophied, our imagination impoverished, and our efforts neutralized.

Each day I fear that He may have died in vain because we do not live as He lived, because we betray His message.

I believe in Jesus Christ, Who rises for our life so that we may be liberated from the prejudices and presumptions of fear and hate, so that we may transform the world into the Kingdom of God.

I believe in the spirit Who came with Jesus into the world.

I believe in the community of all peoples. And in our responsibility for making of our world a place of misery, hunger and violence or the City of God.

I believe that it is possible to build a just peace.

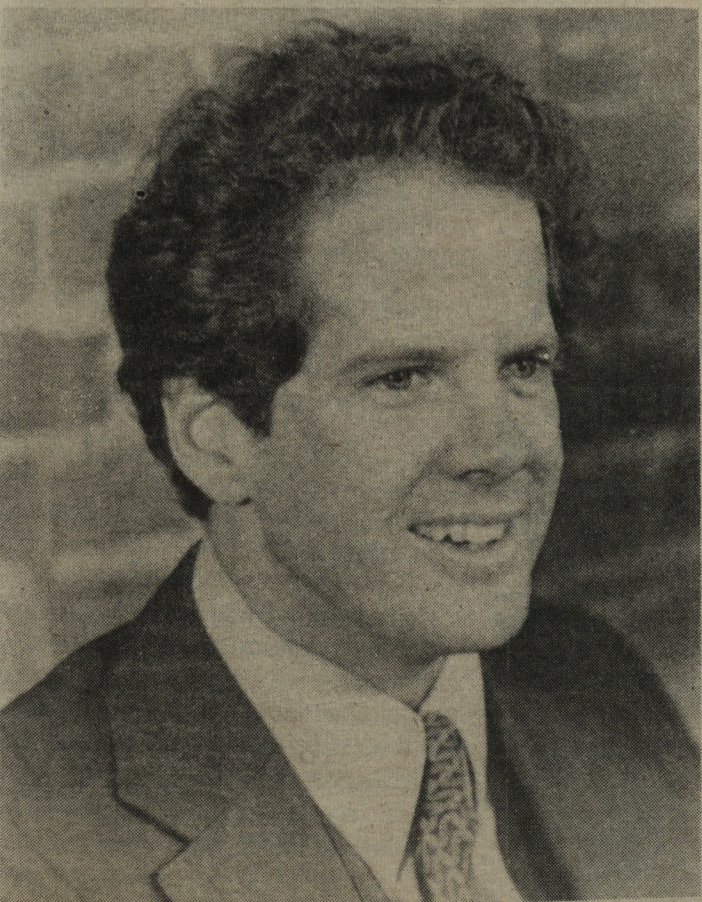
I believe that a life full of meaning is possible for all and in the future of this world of God. AMEN.

(Creed from the Latin American Mass)

There will be a 10 Days Workshop on the food issue beginning at 1:30 Sunday Feb. 20

at

the Duffy Amph.
u.p.e.i.



Guest speaker is
Joe Collins (left)
of the Institute for
Food and Dev. Policy
New York